

FOR THE JOURNAL—NO PRIVATE CONTRACT FOR CITY WATER HEREFTER—HOLAHAN DEFEAT.

BOARD OF PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS DECLARES FOR UNCONDITIONAL MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP OF ALL PUBLIC UTILITIES.

WHEREAS, Section 472 of the Greater New York Charter confers authority upon the Commissioner of Water Supply, with the approval of the Board of Public Improvements, to select and to determine all sources of water supply throughout the State that may be needed for the supply and distribution of water in the city of New York; and

WHEREAS, Said section further provides for the acquisition by condemnation of any real estate or interest therein that may be necessary in order to acquire the sole and exclusive property in such source or sources of water supply, and to extinguish the water rights of any person or corporation therein; and

WHEREAS, The expressed principles of the present administration when seeking the suffrage of the people of this city were THAT THE MUNICIPALITY SHOULD OWN AND CONTROL ALL PUBLIC UTILITIES THEREIN; and

RESOLVED, THAT IT IS NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST NOR FOR THE PUBLIC WEAL, NEITHER IS IT NECESSARY THAT THE CITY SHOULD CONTRACT WITH A PRIVATE CORPORATION FOR ITS SUPPLY OF WATER; that upon the expiration of the term of the existing contracts for such purpose PROCEEDINGS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ACQUIRE THE RIGHTS OF THE PERSONS OR CORPORATIONS HOLDING OR OWNING ANY SUCH RIGHTS, TO THE END THAT THE MUNICIPALITY SHALL OWN ITS WATER SYSTEM EXCLUSIVELY.

Resolution adopted by the Board of Public Improvements by the following vote:

YEAS—Comptroller Coler, Commissioner of Highways Keating, Deputy Commissioner of Street Cleaning Gibson, Commissioner of Bridges Shea, and Commissioner of Sewers Kane

NAYS—President Holahan and Commissioner of Water Supply Dalton.

Presidents Cromwell, of the Borough of Richmond, and Haffen, of the Borough of the Bronx, were recorded affirmatively upon the proposition, if it were deemed that they had the right to vote upon it.

Wheeler H. Peckham and Simon Sterne Show the Policy's Folly and the Contract's Leaks.

It came to a show of hands on the Ramapo Water Trust in the Board of Public Improvements yesterday.

The Board put itself into such a position that it never can, with consistency, vote for any water contract.

Five members placed themselves on record in a declaration to this effect:

That it is not for the public interest that the city contract with any private corporation for its supply of water. That the rights of persons or corporations now supplying water to the city by contract should be acquired for the city at the earliest possible moment.

In short, that the municipality shall "own its water system exclusively."

Mr. Holahan and Mr. Dalton were the only two members of the Board who cared to go on record as opposed to these principles.

Comptroller Coler and his expert engineers opened the proceedings with a broadside of facts and figures to prove—and they did prove—the financial absurdity, the mechanical impossibility and the moral obliquity of the Ramapo Water Company's proposition.

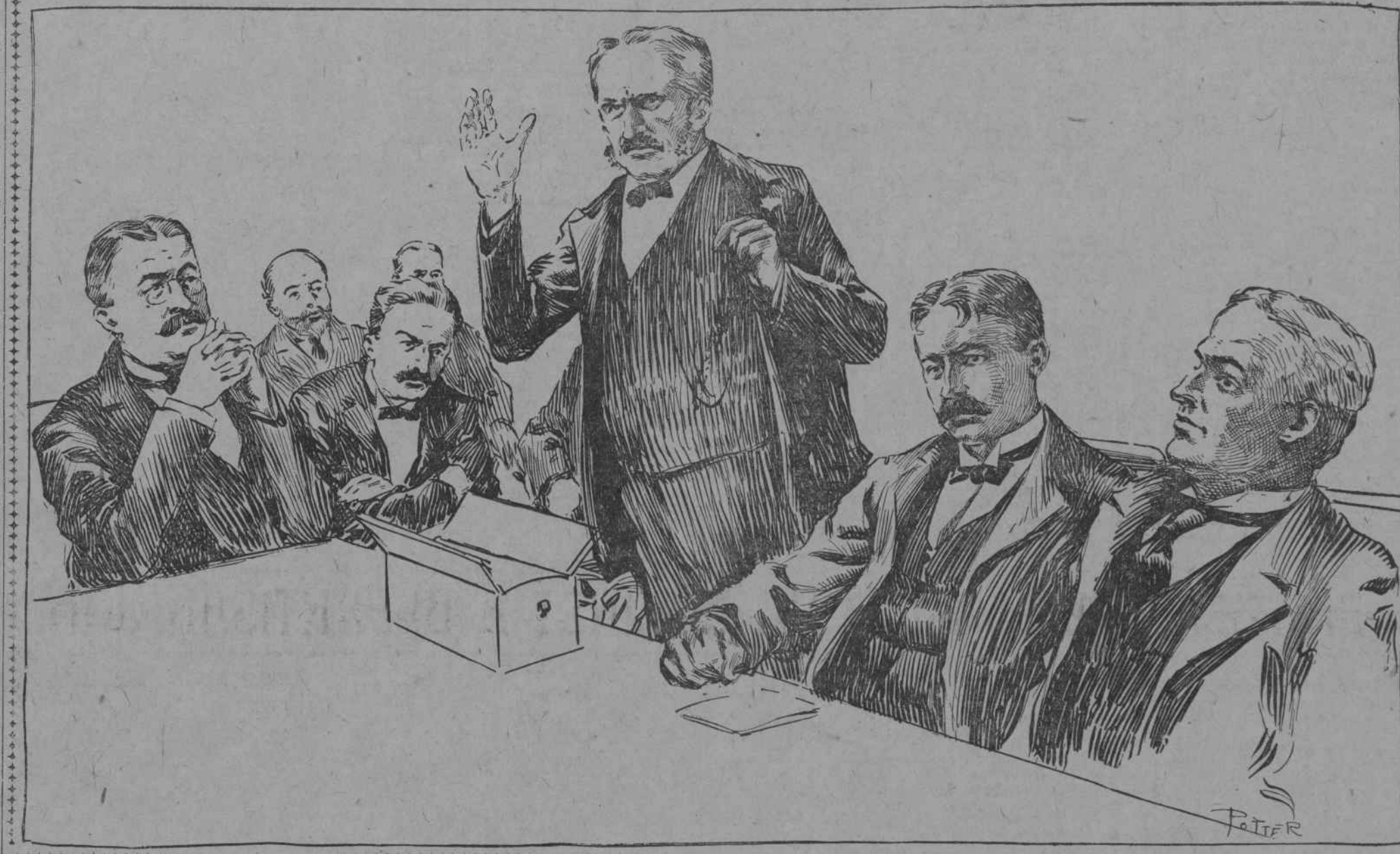
Wheeler H. Peckham and Simon Sterne, speaking for the Citizens' Union, served notice that public sentiment and the public conscience were lined up squarely against what they called this monstrous scheme. Mr. Holahan had a few voices on his side. They were Stephen Barton, famous for his aid in his sister's Red Cross benevolence, who said he represented the Fire Underwriters, and that they wanted more water. He didn't say directly that they wanted Ramapo water. The Fire Underwriters and Fire Chief Croker said they wanted water and water pressure, but didn't exhibit any particular necessity for Ramapo water. Mr. Holahan himself made a deliberate and elaborate argument to show that more water must be had. His figures were ridiculed by the Comptroller's up-to-date estimates. He made a personal declaration that he was honest in this as in other matters. He and the Comptroller had many a skirmish in which Mr. Holahan had the best of it. Mr. Holahan faced defeat unblinking and undaunted, and his "No," when he voted against the declaration of independence from water companies, was just as vigorous as his "Aye" two weeks ago for the Ramapo contract.

Nothing but Ramapo.

There were present when the board met at 2:30 o'clock President Holahan, Comptroller Coler, Bridge Commissioner Shea, Commissioner of Highways Keating, Commissioner of Water Supply Dalton, Commissioner of Sewers Kane, Commissioner of Building, Lighting and Supplies Kenney and Captain Gibson, Street Cleaning Commissioner McCarthy's deputy, Corporation Counsel Whalen was not present. President Cogran, of the borough of Manhattan, and Presidents Haffen, of the Bronx, and Cromwell, of Richmond, were present. The board lost no time in getting down to business on the Ramapo water job.

The services had been made of Justice Bookstaver's order forbidding further action on the board on the contract until a decision on the motion restraining the board from ever acting upon it had been reached. It was understood, therefore, that there was no prospect of any action at all favorable to the Ramapo Company.

A cablegram from President Grout, of Brooklyn, was read, asking for a week's postponement of action. The resolutions adopted by the Social Reform Club denouncing the deal were presented by President Holahan, who made a witty face as they were being read. He looked more pleased as the secretary read a communication from J. Montgomery Hare, president



WHEELER H. PECKHAM SPEAKING TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.

of the Board of Fire Underwriters, asking the board to make provision for an adequate supply of water for fire purposes. Mr. Holahan remarked that he would like to see the city to expend a very large amount of money to utilize the water thus supplied.

Fourthly—That the Ramapo Water Company could not be ready to supply the water contracted for within the time specified in the contract, and that the bond required from that company is entirely inadequate to protect the city from loss if provision is to be made in the meantime for the distribution of such water in the several boroughs of the city.

Fifthly—That the charter of the Ramapo Water Company is void or voidable, and that it is not competent to enter into the contract in question.

Sixthly—That the statements as to the future requirements of the city as to water have been grossly exaggerated in the report of the Commissioner of Water Supply.

Seventhly—That the Water Supply of the boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx will be sufficient for many years to satisfy the population of these boroughs, and that with proper prevention of waste the city watershed and the adjacent territory can provide a large surplus for the use of the other boroughs.

Eighthly—That the legitimate sources of water supply on Long Island for the borough of Brooklyn have been by no means exhausted.

Ninthly—That the Board of Public Improvements is not empowered by law to authorize the execution of the contract in question, and that the approval of that board would not enable the Commissioner of Water Supply to enter into such a contract.

Tenthly—That the city of New York is in a position to expend by the issue of bonds the necessary money to provide for the extension of its water system.

Plenty of Money.

"The last point being of a financial rather than of an engineering nature," continued the Comptroller's report, "there is no reason why I should not immediately state my views to the board."

"The claim has been made that if the necessary bonds were to be issued for this purpose the city would be prevented by constitutional provisions from issuing bonds for other highly necessary purposes."

"The present debt of the city is within the constitutional limit thereof by more than twenty-two million dollars."

"At the next election an amendment to

the Constitution is to be voted on, which, if adopted, will add nearly thirty millions of dollars more to the debt-incuring capacity of the city. In addition to this, the revenues of the Sinking Fund will amount to more than \$15,000,000 in 1900 and will steadily increase after that year. This figure, therefore, represents the amount by which new bonds could be issued without any increase of the city's net debt."

The report of George S. Rice, a consulting engineer, employed by the Comptroller to examine the Croton Creek in Ulster County and the sixteen locations for storage basins in that watershed designed to be used by the Ramapo Water Company, was then presented. Mr. Rice showed that only seven of these reservoirs could be used by the Ramapo Company, and that their total capacity for storage was less than 12,000,000,000 gallons. He concluded that this capacity is manifestly insufficient for a supply of 100,000,000 gallons per diem for New York City, as it would not give much more than two months' supply at a dry time. Mr. Rice also reported that it would not be possible for the Ramapo

Water Company to construct its works on the Croton Creek with the connecting conduits to the city of New York's northern line inside of three, or even five years.

A report by J. James H. Croes, another of the Comptroller's consulting engineers, showed that the Ten Mile River plan for furnishing 100,000,000 gallons per diem to the Croton watershed could be accomplished in three years; that it would take twice as long at least to introduce water from Esopus Creek; and that the Brooklyn and Queens supply could be procured from Long Island in at least a shorter time than from Esopus Creek.

Mr. Croes showed that to supply 100,000,000 gallons per diem the Ten Mile River would cost \$7,000,000 at most. The annual interest on City bonds for that sum would be \$245,000.

The same amount of water furnished by the Ramapo Company would cost \$2,555,000 a year.

To supply Brooklyn 100,000,000 gallons per day would require an initial cost of \$34,500,000. The annual interest on City bonds for that sum would be \$1,171,018.

To take the same amount of water from Brooklyn from the Ramapo Company would

Hot Colloquies Between the Champion of the Treasury and the Leader of Dutcher's Official Allies.

cost \$2,007,500 a year. This makes the cost of taking water from the Ramapo Company about three times as great as the cost of the same amount of water from works constructed by the city of New York.

A statement of Mr. Croes's report deals with the annual waste through leakage of pipes underground which he places at at least half the water supply.

But Mr. Holahan, of the Department of Finance, in a voluminous report to the Comptroller analyzed and ridiculed Commissioner Dalton's figures and arguments in support of the Ramapo scheme.

His conclusions were that there is no question of sufficiency of supply in 1904 or 1900, and that a lower, and fairer rate of supply could be furnished in 1905, consequently that there is no need of excessive haste.

Mr. Holahan quoted from Engineer De Veron's report of 1887 to show that 500,000,000 gallons to the existing supply.

"Since then," said Mr. Holahan, "the cost of iron and steel has been doubled, and this, with the cost of labor under the new law, would double that estimate."

"You mean to say that Tammany Hall," shouted Comptroller Coler, "stands for the proposition that we must give the contract for water supply to a private concern because you do not want to obey the laws of the State and pay laborers their legal wages?"

"Tammany Hall," yelled Mr. Holahan, "has always been the friend of the laboring man. I said no such thing."

"You are certainly did," replied the Comptroller.

"Now, Mr. Comptroller," Mr. Holahan was in a fury, "you've had your say for the last two weeks. You have said all you could say. You have manipulated the press of this city and now—his voice was a perfect shriek—propose to have my say."

Mr. Holahan started to show by the Comptroller's last report that New York was head over ears in debt and couldn't spend any money on water.

"You want rapid transit," said Mr. Holahan. "You can't spend money for water works and have rapid transit too. The Comptroller says so."

"Hold on," said the Comptroller. "I'm the only member of this administration that tried to get rapid transit for this city. I offered the city \$15,000,000 a year for that purpose."

Mr. Shea then moved his resolution to place the board on record as opposed to any further contracts to private companies for supplying water and committing it to the accumulation of such private water as is now used. Mr. Holahan moved to amend by postponing consideration.

Mr. Coler got up to second Mr. Shea's resolution, and said:

"Reference has been made to amateur statesmen. If an amateur is a man who doesn't know enough about politics to get into the Ramapo game, I'm one of them."

He then explained again how \$63,000,000 margin between the cost of the water and the cost of the stock and bonds would be available soon and remarked that in no year had it been necessary to spend more than \$4,000,000 for extension of the water works.

No one voted for Mr. Holahan's motion to postpone.

"My resolution," said Mr. Shea, "is simply to say that you are all committed by the political platform to which you have your presence in this board."

Ayes—Comptroller Coler, Commissioners Keating, Deputy Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Shea, Commissioner Kane, Captain Gibson, and Corporation Counsel Dalton, Borough Presidents Cromwell and Haffen desired that the records show that if they had a right to vote on this question they would vote aye.

While the meeting was breaking up subcommittee from the Masset Committee were served upon all the members of the board.

MCNEY ENOUGH FOR WATER AND FOR RAPID TRANSIT, TOO.

Comptroller Coler, who was enthusiastically received, spoke as follows at the Cooper Union mass meeting last night:

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen—I regret that I am not a more trained public speaker, in order that I might convey more fully to you a few ideas that I may have upon this subject. FIRST OF ALL, THIS SEEMS TO ME A BIPARTISAN MATTER, AND NOT A BIPARTISAN JOB. (Great applause.)

Some fourteen or fifteen years ago some eminent men, who were at that time in the background, and they leave the Democrats to go to jail, and they will "get the stuff."

If you will pardon me for a moment I will describe to you somewhat the conditions of the City of New York when the present administration came into power. I had the honor to succeed ninety-five separate treasurers; in other words, there were ninety-five corporations consolidated in the City of New York. These brought with them all manner of debts and obligations. It took some time to see what the manner of our financial condition was, and through the discussion of that financial problem came up the question of debts.

We were under an overwhelming mass of obligations which seemed to have no end and it was not until the first of July this year that the city came to have a margin for new improvements.

Money for Rapid Transit, Too.

Without going into the long details of the city's financial condition, which you will all read in the reports which will be in the morning papers, I wish to say, I am willing to stake my reputation as an office upon it, that THE CITY

OF NEW YORK—IF ITS FINANCES ARE PROPERLY ADMINISTERED AND IF THERE ARE NO UNDEXTAVAGANCES IN ANY DIRECTION—NOT LONGER HAS MONEY ENOUGH TO OWN ITS WATERWORKS, BUT IT HAS MONEY ENOUGH FOR RAPID TRANSIT BESIDES. (Loud applause.)

I have no feelings of compunction in standing here to-night upon the broad principle of municipal ownership of franchises. (Applause.) And if any party or organization that has elected me takes a position different from that, it is not me, but the organization that elected me, that is untrue to the trust. (Great applause.)

Just one moment about the Ramapo job itself. I heard of it only a day or two before the meeting. Commissioner Shea had a better idea of what was going to turn up than I did, and he managed to post me pretty well on the subject, and we were both there.

IT WAS A PROPOSITION TO VOTE FOR FIVE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR FORTY YEARS, AND WHICH THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS REFUSED TO GIVE THE FINANCIAL OFFICER OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK A RIGHT TO MAKE A REPORT ON BEFORE THE PEOPLE. That is all I have to say on that subject; the way it was rushed through speaks for itself, and the people will have to take care of that. I merely will attend to my duty on the business end of the proposition. (Applause.)

Here was a contract to deliver water at the northern boundary of the city of New York, whether it was in a vacant lot or on the New York Central tracks, we don't know—nothing was specifically arranged for it.

It would cost as probably ten or twenty millions of dollars to build the reservoirs to receive that water. The highest estimate that any engineer—

and now I am speaking of the engineer of the Water Department—and Chief Tully, of the Aqueduct Commission—the highest amount that they say they can possibly spend a year is from ten to fifteen millions of dollars.

The highest amount that has ever been spent in the City of New York up to the present time in the construction of the Croton Aqueduct and of your magnificent water supply is \$4,500,000 in one year.

THE CONTRACT WITH THIS COMPANY PROVIDED FOR PAYING MORE MONEY THAN THE CITY OF NEW YORK HAS EVER YET EXPENDED IN ONE YEAR ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS OWN WORKS.

A Telling Comparison.

The neighborhood of \$500,000 a year is in the neighborhood of \$500,000 more than you now receive from the Croton Aqueduct fund in the boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx, and it is unnecessary for me to go further on that subject.

But there is one point that I want to, in a measure, if I can, address myself to the citizens of New York. For years the bad in all New York has been shown up; we read of crime and of everything else. It seems to me the time will come when passion and political corruption may, in some degree, cease, and throughout the world the city of New York will come to be known what it is—the best, the greatest city in the world. (Applause.)

We do not hear much of the Metropolitan Museum or the Museum of Natural History, of our great school system and all those things, and it seems to me that our people, after we have won this fight, as win it we will (applause)—we should speak well of our city and not all the time say we have bad things here. We have good things. Let us fight out these

things among ourselves; let us place the responsibility where it belongs, and in the end advertise our own town as the greatest there is. (Applause.)

THEIR INFLUENCE IS AGAINST RAMAPO.

Telegrams of regret for inability to attend the Cooper Union meeting were read from ex-Congressman Clayton, John Jacob Astor, Bridge Commissioner Shea, ex-Governor David B. Hill and others.

Here are some of them:

Newport, R. I., Aug. 30.
Very glad to have you use my name for Ramapo public meeting, but regret cannot serve actively on committee. Do not expect to be in New York for some time.
J. J. ASTOR.

Profrat House, N. H., Aug. 29.
Have no apology to offer for action seventeen years ago regarding New York, then dangerously deficient in water supply. Absolutely opposed to Ramapo contract. Comptroller Coler deserves well of all good citizens. Ex-Secretary Bliss fully concurs.
CHARLES STEWART SMITH.

W. R. Hearst, New York Journal.
I feel now just as I did when the matter first came up in the Board of Public Improvements, that the whole scheme is next to highway robbery, and the New York Journal can count on me for anything it wishes me to do in relation to the matter. Respectfully,
JOHN L. SHEA.

Bath, Beach, N. Y.
W. R. Hearst, N. Y. Journal: I shall be very glad to have my name added to the committee to defeat the Ramapo scheme.
WILLIAM ASTOR CHANLER.

Washington, D. C., Aug. 30.
N. Y. Journal: Impossible to come to meeting to protest against Ramapo outrage, but this does not lessen my indignation against the job, which must be defeated by all honorable means.
SAMUEL COMPTON.

President American Federation of Labor.

Dewey Nearing Home.

Leslie's Weekly with its usual enterprising sent a special photographer to Naples to join Admiral Dewey. As a result this week's paper is bristling with his work. Five full pages of photographs—the only authentic pictures secured since the Admiral left the Orient.

MORE LEGAL MOUTHERS TO CATCH RAMAPO RATS.

Mr. Charles Frederick Adams, of Brooklyn, always to the forefront when the interests of the people are endangered, made an eloquent and forceful speech. He said, in commenting upon the resolutions passed by the mass meeting:

I am a believer in fair play, and although I have not been retained by our eminent Brooklynite—by the way, here is another Brooklynite, Silas B. Dutcher (his)—to present his views, I do wish in a measure to show you some of his views. He or some one for him, kindly furnished me with this little pamphlet on this question, and I want to call your attention to the points which are made by that very able and ingenious gentleman. All this is in answer to the inquiries of your Comptroller. The first and main point made by our friend, Mr. Dutcher, is this:

(Reading from the pamphlet) "The objection to obtaining water by contract with a private company has no force in this instance," says Mr. Dutcher. Why? Watch the conclusive proof. (Again reading) "Inasmuch as our leading business men, property owners and taxpayers have asked that it should be done, and petitioned the Legislature to enact a law permitting it to be done, New York City now having, as is said, a number of contracts with private water companies."

In his pamphlet he speaks of a certain petition signed by some twelve hundred property owners and taxpayers and real estate brokers, etc., and the fact that they have petitioned that the city should be allowed to contract with a private company to supply water to New York to extend the water supply proves to our ingenious, as well as ingenious, friend, Mr. Dutcher, that in this instance the principle of municipal ownership does not apply.

Watch that. Did you ever see a greater faith in a public petition. My friends,

a petition can be got to be signed for almost any purpose whatever.

I haven't any doubt, from my experience and from experiments tried upon the gullible public in the matter of signing petitions, it has been tried, and I dare say—I venture to say—that if my friend, Mr. Dutcher, were to circulate a petition around among those twelve hundred taxpayers that he speaks about, a petition for any purpose; for instance, that Silas B. Dutcher be hanged (laughter), it would be signed. I haven't the slightest doubt he could get plenty of signatures to that.

Made It a Crime.

Notice the other point (reading from the pamphlet): "That New York City already has a number of private contracts—therefore let us add to them. If you have already three or four diseases, get some more. That answers that."

Here and there will be an official recognition of crime. Now, it is not a crime to take more profit out of the poor citizens of New York than they are entitled to by fighting a robber legally as well as morally.

We have another little fallacy. I am very impertinent. I am so envious of Mr. Coler's popularity with these gentlemen that I want also to be impertinent. Here is the fallacy (reading): "What is necessary or best for the city to do is for its officers to decide."

I say No. It is not for its officers to decide. It is for the people themselves to decide. (Applause.) And woe to the officers who dare, in the face of public opinion, betray the interests which have been trusted to their care. (Applause.) It is no more for our officers to decide these things than it is for our cooks to decide what kind of dinner we shall give our families.

Another thing (reading): "It is a simple business proposition."

Did you ever see a simpler? (Laughter.)

It is the simplest thing in the world. My friends, let us analyze their favorite method of argument which is called "the reductio ad absurdum." Mr. Stern will tell you what that is in English. Could you say your own definition of "reductio ad absurdum." If the city will give me—I am going to say fifty cents of the capital stock—if the city will give me this contract I will undertake to have those things done, and I will undertake to get rich besides, because the margin that these gentlemen allow themselves is enough to get the land which they have not sold; they have only got cheap options on some of it.

It is necessary enough to have the works, and it is enough to make a tremendous revenue. That is what they are after.

Why should the city put on its feet a new enterprise and give it all the profits, when it itself is furnishing all the capital? Their capital is to be got out of the stock and the bonds to which our credit is to give value. (Applause.)

I want to suggest that the committee be allowed, and it will gladly do so, to furnish, at its expense, able counsel who are already familiar with the statistical details, and all the details, to aid Mr. Moss and the counsel of the Masset Committee to show up this whole matter. (Great applause.)

We have already counsel hard at work upon this thing. Let us furnish Mr. Simon Sterne, for instance, and if he does not make them sick, we can furnish them with the details of this matter that will make these gentlemen wither they never had been born.

Our position is that the city shall have municipal ownership in this matter, and shall, as fast as practicable, extend the same. (Applause.)

much rich food causes indigestion; Johnson's relief it at once.